

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached "Replacement Sheets" of drawings include changes to Figures 8-10. The attached "Replacement Sheets," which include Figures 8-10, replaces the original sheets including Figures 8-10.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 5 remain pending in the present application. Claims 3, 4 and 6-13 have been withdrawn by the Examiner. Claim 1 has been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, drawings and claims as originally filed.

OBJECTION TO THE DRAWINGS

The Examiner has objected to Figures 8-10 as not being identified as prior art. Accordingly, Applicants attach Replacement Sheets with Figs. 8-10 identified as –Prior Art--.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 2 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Rutter et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,682,221) in view of Toda (U.S. Patent No. 6,672,769) and Hajzler (U.S. Patent No. 5,431,413). The Examiner alleges that the combination would render Applicants' claims obvious to those skilled in the art.

Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 1 further defines the vehicle wheel bearing. The sealing device is on an inboard side of the bearing. The sealing device includes a first sealing plate arranged on the inner ring and a second sealing plate arranged on the outer member opposite to the first sealing plate. An elastomeric material is bonded on the radially extending portion of the first sealing plate. The elastomeric material includes a magnetic substance powder. A non-elastomeric portion of the first sealing plate extends radially inward such that the exposed portion of the inner ring is entirely covered by the non-elastomeric portion.

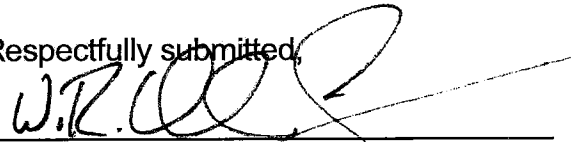
The Rutter et al. reference cited by the Examiner fails to disclose Applicants' claims. Rutter et al. discloses a sealing element 10 which is made from a rubber material which includes lips 21 and 22. See column 2, lines 41-55. The sealing member does not extend radially inward such that the exposed portion of the inner ring is entirely covered by the non-elastomeric portion. The Toda et al. reference cited by the Examiner illustrates a sealing mechanism which is sandwiched between the inner ring and outer ring. It neither discloses nor illustrates any type of non-elastomeric member entirely covering the inner ring. Additionally, the Hajzler reference cited by the Examiner illustrates a seal sandwiched between the inner and outer ring like that of Toda et al.

Accordingly, all of the references cited by the Examiner teach away from having a non-polymeric portion of the first sealing plate extending radially inward such that the exposed portion of the inner ring is entirely covered by the non-elastomeric portion. In fact, all of the references cited by the Examiner illustrate the elastomeric portion abutting the inner ring. Thus, the references fail to illustrate Applicants' claims. Accordingly, Applicants believe Claim 1, as well as dependent Claims 2 and 5, to be patentably distinct over the art cited by the Examiner.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to pass the case to issue at his earliest possible convenience.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present application, he should not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W.R. Duke Taylor', written over a horizontal line.

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WRDT/lkj

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